

PREHOSPITAL TRAUMA LIFE SUPPORT (PHTLS) PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

**VISIT US ONLINE FOR
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

<https://prehospitaltraumalifesupport.examzify.com>



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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. In the context of PHTLS, what does the term "mechanism of injury" (MOI) refer to?**
 - A. The specific medical history of the patient
 - B. The forces involved and method by which trauma occurred
 - C. The available resources for patient care
 - D. The timeline of events leading up to the injury
- 2. How does trauma affect the body's physiological response?**
 - A. It triggers stress responses that can impact heart rate, blood pressure, and hormone levels
 - B. It has no significant impact on hormonal balance
 - C. It only affects the muscular system and does not influence vital signs
 - D. It causes an immediate drop in energy levels without affecting vital signs
- 3. When dealing with penetrating trauma, what driving principle should be considered?**
 - A. Assessing injury patterns after stabilization
 - B. Transport the patient to the nearest facility regardless of injury
 - C. Minimizing infection risks through immediate cleaning
 - D. Recognizing that the trajectory of injury may follow the object
- 4. What is the foundation of effective trauma care?**
 - A. Protocols permitting invasive airway procedures
 - B. The ability to administer large amounts of crystalloid fluids
 - C. The ability to quickly locate and manage life-threatening and potentially life-threatening injuries
 - D. Effective spinal immobilization skills
- 5. What is the aim of the secondary assessment in trauma care?**
 - A. To perform a quick transport to the hospital
 - B. To identify all injuries and medical issues not found in the primary survey
 - C. To prepare the patient for surgery
 - D. To assess psychological stability of the patient

- 6. What should rescuers assess when dealing with a patient with a penetrating injury?**
- A. The patient's vital signs only
 - B. The depth of the injury, potential vascular damage, and signs of internal bleeding
 - C. Only the external wound itself
 - D. The patient's history of previous injuries
- 7. What is the initial treatment approach for a suspected pelvic fracture?**
- A. Apply a rigid splint to immobilize the area
 - B. Stabilize the pelvis using a pelvic binder or similar device
 - C. Immediately transport the patient for surgical intervention
 - D. Elevate the legs to reduce bleeding
- 8. What role does shock play in trauma care?**
- A. It provides a clear understanding of the patient's pain level
 - B. It indicates the body's response to severe injury
 - C. It shows the effectiveness of airway management
 - D. It is a sign that medication is required immediately
- 9. What is the purpose of a trauma registry?**
- A. To help in billing procedures for trauma patients
 - B. To collect and analyze data on trauma patients for quality improvement and research
 - C. To document patient medication history
 - D. To schedule surgical procedures
- 10. How is a tension pneumothorax treated in the prehospital setting?**
- A. By administering medications to relax the chest wall
 - B. By decompression of the pleural space, typically using a needle or chest tube
 - C. By positioning the patient upright to facilitate breathing
 - D. By administering oxygen therapy exclusively

Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. D
4. C
5. B
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. B

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Explanations

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1. In the context of PHTLS, what does the term "mechanism of injury" (MOI) refer to?

- A. The specific medical history of the patient
- B. The forces involved and method by which trauma occurred**
- C. The available resources for patient care
- D. The timeline of events leading up to the injury

The term "mechanism of injury" (MOI) is crucial in prehospital trauma assessment as it refers to the forces involved and the method by which trauma occurred. Understanding the MOI helps healthcare providers determine the potential severity of injuries and anticipate what types of injuries are likely based on the circumstances surrounding the incident. For example, a high-speed collision is likely to result in different types of injuries compared to a simple fall from standing height. Identifying the MOI allows for targeted assessments and interventions, as it provides insight into the mechanisms that could cause specific injuries. This knowledge is vital for applying the appropriate emergency care and planning for further medical treatment based on the patterns of trauma associated with that mechanism. Other options presented do not align with the definition of MOI. The specific medical history of the patient and the available resources for patient care are considerations during the assessment but do not define the mechanism of injury. Similarly, while the timeline of events leading to the injury can be relevant in understanding a patient's condition, it does not encompass the core concept of how the injury itself occurred and is thus separate from the MOI.

2. How does trauma affect the body's physiological response?

- A. It triggers stress responses that can impact heart rate, blood pressure, and hormone levels**
- B. It has no significant impact on hormonal balance
- C. It only affects the muscular system and does not influence vital signs
- D. It causes an immediate drop in energy levels without affecting vital signs

Trauma has a profound impact on the body's physiological responses, primarily through the activation of the stress response system. When a person experiences trauma, the body perceives it as a threat, triggering various physiological changes mediated by the autonomic nervous system and the endocrine system. The activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis leads to the release of stress hormones such as adrenaline (epinephrine) and cortisol. These hormones are responsible for various changes, including increased heart rate and elevated blood pressure, which prepare the body for a "fight or flight" response. This is crucial for survival as it enhances blood flow to vital organs and improves physical performance in emergency situations. Furthermore, trauma can lead to alterations in hormonal levels that might sustain the stress response, complicating the body's homeostasis and overall balance. Such changes can have lasting effects on an individual's physical health if the stress response remains activated over time. In contrast, other options do not accurately depict the complexity of the body's response to trauma, particularly in relation to vital sign changes and hormonal imbalances. Trauma's impact extends beyond just the muscular system, as it significantly affects cardiovascular, hormonal, and other physiological systems. The drop in energy levels mentioned in one of

3. When dealing with penetrating trauma, what driving principle should be considered?

- A. Assessing injury patterns after stabilization
- B. Transport the patient to the nearest facility regardless of injury
- C. Minimizing infection risks through immediate cleaning

D. Recognizing that the trajectory of injury may follow the object

When dealing with penetrating trauma, recognizing that the trajectory of injury may follow the object is crucial for several reasons. The trajectory can significantly affect the type and extent of internal injuries sustained by the patient. Understanding this principle helps healthcare providers anticipate the potential damage to organs, blood vessels, and other structures along the path of the penetrating object. This knowledge allows for more informed decision-making regarding the necessary interventions. For instance, if the trajectory indicates possible injury to critical structures, prehospital providers can prioritize stabilization measures, such as maintaining airway patency or controlling hemorrhage, and communicate specific concerns to the receiving facility. While other options may hold some relevance in the broader context of trauma care, they do not emphasize the critical need to understand and assess the potential pathways of injury that a penetrating object can create. This awareness is vital for implementing appropriate treatment and ensuring the best possible outcomes for patients suffering from such injuries.

4. What is the foundation of effective trauma care?

- A. Protocols permitting invasive airway procedures
- B. The ability to administer large amounts of crystalloid fluids
- C. The ability to quickly locate and manage life-threatening and potentially life-threatening injuries
- D. Effective spinal immobilization skills

The foundation of effective trauma care lies in the ability to quickly locate and manage life-threatening and potentially life-threatening injuries. This approach is crucial because the primary goal in trauma care is to stabilize the patient and address immediate threats to life, such as severe bleeding, airway compromise, or cardiac arrest. Rapid identification and management of these critical issues can significantly impact patient outcomes and survival rates. Trauma often results in multiple injuries that may not be immediately apparent; therefore, a thorough and rapid assessment is essential. Effective trauma care involves prioritizing interventions that target these life-threatening conditions swiftly, often following the "ABC" approach (Airway, Breathing, Circulation). This dynamic assessment allows for timely and appropriate interventions that can save lives, highlighting the importance of triaging injuries effectively. While other aspects such as airway management techniques, fluid resuscitation, and spinal immobilization are important components of trauma care, they should be considered within the context of the broader focus on identifying and treating life-threatening injuries. That is why the ability to manage these critical injuries is seen as foundational in trauma care scenarios.

5. What is the aim of the secondary assessment in trauma care?

- A. To perform a quick transport to the hospital
- B. To identify all injuries and medical issues not found in the primary survey**
- C. To prepare the patient for surgery
- D. To assess psychological stability of the patient

The aim of the secondary assessment in trauma care is to identify all injuries and medical issues that may not have been detected during the primary survey. The primary survey focuses on addressing immediate life threats and stabilizing the patient, while the secondary assessment allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of the patient's condition. This involves a systematic head-to-toe examination, taking a thorough history, and performing necessary diagnostic procedures to uncover any hidden or less obvious injuries, such as fractures, internal bleeding, or other underlying medical conditions. By identifying these issues, healthcare providers can initiate appropriate interventions and prioritize treatment, ultimately improving the patient's overall outcome. The other choices do not capture the comprehensive assessment focus that is central to the secondary assessment.

6. What should rescuers assess when dealing with a patient with a penetrating injury?

- A. The patient's vital signs only
- B. The depth of the injury, potential vascular damage, and signs of internal bleeding**
- C. Only the external wound itself
- D. The patient's history of previous injuries

When addressing a patient with a penetrating injury, it is crucial to assess the depth of the injury, potential vascular damage, and signs of internal bleeding. A penetrating injury can cause damage that is not immediately visible, and understanding these factors can significantly affect treatment and outcomes. Evaluating the depth of the injury helps identify how deep the penetrating object has gone and what structures may be involved, such as muscle, organ, or blood vessels. This depth assessment can also provide insight into the likelihood of internal complications, such as bleeding or damage to vital organs. Potential vascular damage is another critical consideration; injuries that involve major blood vessels can lead to severe hemorrhage and may require urgent intervention. Recognizing signs of internal bleeding is essential for determining the severity of the injury and informing the transport and treatment priorities, particularly if the patient shows signs of shock or decreased perfusion. Given these considerations, option B encompasses a comprehensive assessment that goes beyond just the external appearance of the wound or basic vital signs, aligning with best practices in trauma care. In trauma situations, thorough evaluations are crucial in formulating an appropriate and effective treatment plan.

7. What is the initial treatment approach for a suspected pelvic fracture?

- A. Apply a rigid splint to immobilize the area
- B. Stabilize the pelvis using a pelvic binder or similar device**
- C. Immediately transport the patient for surgical intervention
- D. Elevate the legs to reduce bleeding

The initial treatment approach for a suspected pelvic fracture is to stabilize the pelvis using a pelvic binder or a similar device. This method is crucial because pelvic fractures can result in significant hemorrhage due to the large vessels located within the pelvis. By applying a pelvic binder, you can effectively compress the bony structures of the pelvis, which helps to decrease bleeding and provides stability to the fracture site. This stabilization can significantly reduce the risk of further injury and complications, such as shock. Using a pelvic binder early in the management of a pelvic fracture is also essential in prehospital care, as it can control hemorrhage before the patient arrives at a medical facility, thereby improving their chances of a positive outcome. Proper pelvic stabilization can be life-saving, allowing for effective control of bleeding while minimizing movement and the potential for other injuries. Other methods, such as applying a rigid splint or elevating the legs, do not address the critical issue of internal hemorrhage associated with pelvic fractures. Immediate transport for surgical intervention is also not the priority during initial field management, as the focus should be on stabilization and support until the patient reaches a trauma center.

8. What role does shock play in trauma care?

- A. It provides a clear understanding of the patient's pain level
- B. It indicates the body's response to severe injury**
- C. It shows the effectiveness of airway management
- D. It is a sign that medication is required immediately

Shock plays a crucial role in trauma care as it serves as an indication of the body's response to severe injury. When a patient experiences trauma, the body can react with a state of shock, which is characterized by inadequate blood flow and oxygen delivery to vital organs. This physiological response occurs due to various factors, such as blood loss, fluid shifts, or severe pain, and is often a sign of underlying issues like hypovolemia or significant internal injuries. Recognizing the signs of shock is essential in trauma care, as it allows healthcare providers to prioritize treatment and implement interventions quickly to stabilize the patient. Immediate actions may involve administering fluids, controlling any active bleeding, or addressing airway concerns to restore adequate perfusion and protect organ function. While other aspects of trauma care, such as pain management and airway effectiveness, are important, they do not directly reflect the broader systemic response to injury that shock encompasses. Therefore, understanding and recognizing shock as a response to trauma is vital for determining the urgency and nature of treatment in critically injured patients.

9. What is the purpose of a trauma registry?

- A. To help in billing procedures for trauma patients
- B. To collect and analyze data on trauma patients for quality improvement and research**
- C. To document patient medication history
- D. To schedule surgical procedures

A trauma registry serves a critical role in the systematic collection and analysis of data regarding trauma patients. The primary purpose of such a registry is to gather comprehensive information related to patient outcomes, demographics, injury mechanisms, treatment protocols, and other relevant clinical data. This information is then used to identify patterns, track performance, assess the efficacy of treatment protocols, and implement strategies aimed at improving patient care and outcomes in trauma settings. Additionally, trauma registries play a significant role in research initiatives. They provide a robust database for studies aimed at understanding various aspects of trauma care, leading to advancements in clinical practice and policy changes that can enhance patient safety and care efficiency. While other functions like billing procedures, documenting medication history, or scheduling surgical procedures are important in a healthcare setting, they are not the primary focus of a trauma registry. The essence of a trauma registry lies in its contribution to enhancing the quality of care through data-driven decisions, continual improvement, and research advancements in trauma care.

10. How is a tension pneumothorax treated in the prehospital setting?

- A. By administering medications to relax the chest wall
- B. By decompression of the pleural space, typically using a needle or chest tube**
- C. By positioning the patient upright to facilitate breathing
- D. By administering oxygen therapy exclusively

In the prehospital setting, the primary method for treating a tension pneumothorax is through decompression of the pleural space, which is often achieved by using a needle or a chest tube. A tension pneumothorax occurs when air accumulates in the pleural space and creates increased pressure, leading to respiratory distress and potential cardiovascular collapse. By performing needle decompression, a healthcare provider can quickly relieve the pressure, allowing the lung to reinflate and improving the patient's oxygenation and overall condition. Immediate intervention is crucial, as this condition can rapidly become life-threatening. Accessing the pleural space with a needle, usually inserted at the second intercostal space in the midclavicular line, allows trapped air to escape. This procedure is crucial in the field because it does not require extensive equipment and can be performed quickly, providing lifesaving relief. Other treatments such as medications to relax the chest wall, positioning the patient upright, or administering only oxygen therapy would not address the underlying issue of trapped air in the pleural space. Each of these alternatives may provide some symptomatic relief but would not resolve the critical aspect of a tension pneumothorax, which is the acute physical pressure needing immediate release.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

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We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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